

# **NOAA EEO COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

## **Friday November 9, 2001**

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Attendee's:

Council Chairman - Capt. Richard R. Behn (Ex.Dir.- DUSEC)

Council Members - Al Corea (CRO/OFA), Jesse James (NWS), Jim Martin for Bob Taylor (OMAO), Betty Dodds (NWS), Frances C. Silva (OGC), Barbara Marshall-Bailey (Diversity), Barbara Tobe (NWS), Ann Georgilas for Louisa Koch (OAR), Larry Beat (OCR/OFA), Zane Schauer (HRMO), B. Carzell Cody (OGC), Fiona Horsfall (NWS), Howard Friedman (OAR), Mary Glackin (NESDIS), Jamison Hawkins (NOS), Stewart Remer (OFA), James Su (NWS), John Oliver (NMFS), Karen Benedict (OFA), CDR Philip Kenul (OMAO), Anibal Mulero (NMFS), Erica Van Coverden (OAR), John Wright, Jr. (NWS), Patricia Buckley (NWS)  
The meeting was called to order at 8:35am by Al Corea, Director NOAA Office of Civil Rights.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Al Corea asked the council to consider accepting the draft minutes of the Friday March 2, 2001 NOAA EEO Council meeting, which he had previously sent out to the council for review. Mary Glackin provided corrections. Howie Friedman moved to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded, and the minutes (with corrections) of the March 2, 2001 NOAA EEO Council meeting were approved by a consensus vote.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Al Corea briefed the council on the meeting agenda and provided a quick overview of the contents of the packet of material that each council member received.

Al discussed the Disability Awareness program. Al commented that recently a number of senior NOAA management officials participated in an exercise which simulated various types of disabilities for the participants. Several disabled persons shadowed non-disabled persons who attempted to perform basic daily tasks while they experienced having a disability. Al indicated that the exercise was a sharing and learning experience for all participants. He also mentioned that on November 13, 2001 there was to be a panel discussion concerning said program, with Scott Gudes, Rich Behn, Stu Remer, David Evans, John Jones, John Oliver and Mary Glackin.

Mary mentioned it was a great idea to have senior level management involved in and on the

disability program panel, and suggested to the council that they promote more involvement/participation of senior level management in other awareness programs.

Al Corea mentioned that Helen Powell is the Disability Program Manager. Helen headed up the committee that planned this past Disability Awareness month activities. Al suggested that anyone interested in participating in these types of events please contact his office.

Al commended the line offices for their support of the ORISE program. He indicated that there was a 39% increase in NOAA participation over the past year. A handout was provided detailing NOAA partnership participation and a program activities summary.

Because there were new council members present each council member introduced themselves.

John Wright (NWS) introduced himself to the council. John mentioned he was the founder and chairperson of the High School High Tech program. John indicated he is the special emphasis program manager for the NWS Eastern Regions People with Disability/Disabled Veterans program council. John commented he serves on the NWS's Strategic Roadmap Planning Council. John provided each council member with a pamphlet detailing the High School High Tech program.

Stu Remer stated that OFA had just published a brand new outreach/recruitment brochure. Samples were passed around for the councils review and comment.

Jamie Hawkins (NOS) introduced himself to the council. Jamie mentioned he was the Deputy Assistant Administrator for NOS. He indicated that this past summer the NOS EEO Advisory Committee sponsored a Disability Etiquette Brownbag on August 1, 2001. The purpose of the seminar was to educate people about disabilities and explain the proper way to interact with people who have disabilities. Also, NOS has just completed a EEO bulletin board project, which now provides for an EEO bulletin board on each floor where there is an NOS presence. Jamie also indicated that NOS continues to support Morgan State Universities as a member of the Steering Committee for the 2002 Partnering 2K conference.

Al mentioned that the Communications, and Disability subcommittees would be losing their chairpersons. Al asked that persons interested in serving on the committees contact his office or the committee directly. The committees would then decide on their respective chairs.

Al mentioned a question that had been previously brought to the council's attention by Bernard Cody (OGC), concerning representation on the council by various employee groups, such as: BIG - Blacks in Government, CLEO - Commerce Latino Employee's Organization, and FAPAC - Federal Asian Pacific American Council. Al mentioned that the NOAA Diversity Council did recently recognize these groups on their council. Al asked for comments and discussion on the subject from the council.

Barbara Marshall-Bailey stated that the EEO Council should consider establishing slots on the council for officially recognized employee groups. Discussion ensued by the council as to what

constituted a recognized employee group. Al commented to the council that the council's size was originally established at 23 individuals consisting of both management and non-management employee's, including ex officio representatives from the Diversity Office, Office of General Council, and the Office of Human Resources Management.

A council member commented that a sub-committee could be established to include employee group representation. The employee groups would be members of the sub-committee and have a voice on the council thru that sub-committee.

Al suggested that a subcommittee, chaired by Bernard Cody be established to address issues concerning employee group representation on the council, and that the subcommittee work with Zane Schauer of OHRM to review applicable departmental guidelines and directives concerning employee group recognition by NOAA. Zane indicated he would provide information to Bernard concerning this issue. A show of hands indicated a unanimous vote in favor of Barnard Cody looking into this action item for the council, and reporting back to the council his findings.

Howie Friedman commented that his office (AOML) was in the process of developing a strategic plan, but that the input the office received from NOAA to assist them in the development of the plan was not very comprehensive. Al Corea mentioned that NOAA was also in the process of developing a strategic plan. Capt. Behn indicated to Howie that his comments have been duly noted, and would be addressed. He mentioned that NESDIS has a very good strategic plan, and a copy of that plan could be provided to Howie.

Barbara Marshall-Bailey conveyed to the council information concerning the upcoming SFA II program that will begin in January 2002. Barbara asked that council members who may be involved with employee groups encourage their participation in the survey. She indicated that it was very important that all employees have the opportunity to take the survey, and participate in the SFA process if they so wished. She indicated that there had been no requests for SFA data by the EEO council, and she encouraged the council to use the data to enhance their programs and address quality of work life issues and concerns within their agencies.

#### **UPDATE FROM THE SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHICANOS AND NATIVE AMERICANS IN SCIENCE (SACNAS)**

Larry Beat briefed the council on his recent activities with the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). Larry indicated that he was currently on an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignment with SACNAS. Jerry provided the council with a pamphlet entitled SACNAS E-Mentoring Teacher-Scientist Partnerships Program, and a SACNAS Newsletter dated Fall 2001. Jerry also provided the council with a slide presentation detailing a brief overview of Chicano history, the SACNAS Mission Statement, Internal SACNAS programs, the NOAA/SACNAS partnership agreement, and the recent SACNAS National Conference held in Phoenix, AZ in September 2001. Jerry stated that the next SACNAS Conference would be held in Anehiem, CA. September 26 thru 29, 2002. He also indicated that there would be a call for Scientific Symposia and a Professional Development Sessions to be issued shortly.

Jerry also conveyed information concerning Girls Incorporated (formerly - Girls Clubs of America). Jerry mentioned the Operation SMART program. The SMART program focuses on enhancing girls' skills in the math, engineering, and science fields. Jerry encouraged NOAA participation in mentoring programs with Girls Incorporated. Jerry mentioned that the primary purpose of Girls Incorporated is to introduce girls to non-traditional careers.

For more information concerning the SACNAS and Girls Incorporated programs please contact Jerry at his NOAA/SACNAS offices through the Office of Civil Rights.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Underrepresentation Committee:**

Al Corea introduced Stan Lum (HRMO) to the council, and commented that Stan has been extremely instrumental in getting the Exit Interview plan off the ground for NOAA.

Stan addressed the council as to what's been happening with the Exit Interview program. He commented that the program was launched approximately 1 year ago with an email from the HRMO Director sent to all supervisors and managers providing an overview of the Exit Interview, and encouraging its use. Stan mentioned that the Exit Interview has been set up as an online survey of departing employees, focusing on comments from those employees as to their decisions for leaving their respective workplaces and positions. Stan mentioned he is in the process of redesigning the questionnaire to make it easier to collect the specific data on the questionnaire.

Stan indicated that he was trying to incorporate the Exit Interview into the Employee Separation and Clearance processes. Discussion continued by the council as to why the Exit Interview was needed, and to what extent its impact would have on NOAA employee underrepresentation, recruitment, and retention policies.

Stan handed out a recently published NOAA recruitment brochure. It was indicated that Karen Benedict (HRMO Employment Officer) has a large quantity available for distribution for NOAA events. A contact phone number was provided. That number is 301-713-0534 Ext. 145. It was also indicated that NOAA EEO Program Managers had already been provided with 1000 brochures each.

Al Corea provided an Educational Outreach Tool Kit tally sheet to show NOAA contacts with various schools and events, and the usage of materials thereof. Erica Van Coverden indicated that she had been provided several hundred educational outreach items, but that was not indicated on the tally sheet. Al said that he would check into it.

Jim Martin indicated that OMAO had designed and printed up their own recruitment brochures.

Fiona Horsfall presented a slide presentation concerning a proposed year-round NOAA-wide

Recruitment and Outreach program. The program concept is to get NOAA national exposure among educational systems. The program is divided into several phases designed to develop the foundations of the plan and implementation.

Al Corea indicated that the funding plan for this proposal has not yet been established. Barbara Marshall-Bailey commented on the possibility of establishing opportunities for current employees within the NOAA organization. She indicated that she felt that NOAA did not provide enough opportunities for their current employees to move into underrepresented areas.

### **Disabilities Committee:**

Betty Dodds introduced Rosanne Greene who addressed the council on the current status of the Voluntary Leave Bank Program, including an overview slide presentation detailing the program's history, regulations/guidelines, program planning, and projected milestones.

Betty Dodds addressed the council soliciting new subcommittee members. Betty also commented that there were not enough handicap parking areas available for disabled employees at the SSMC complex. She also indicated that several employees had already been ticketed as a result of parking in areas not authorized for handicap personnel. Discussion ensued by the council concerning handicap parking space availability and access in the SSMC complex.

Al Corea indicated to the council that he would make this problem an action item, and work with the facilities management people in an attempt to understand the dilemma and report back to the council on his findings.

Betty also indicated her concern for handicap personnel in the facility during emergency situations, and the inability of the hard of hearing employee to know that a potential danger or evacuation of the complex were occurring. Betty commented that the use of vibrating pagers should be issued to those afflicted employees for their protection and use. Barbara Marshall-Bailey commented that the use of pagers in other agencies was a huge success, and she endorsed their use within the SSMC complex by the hard of hearing employee's.

Al proposed to the council that the subcommittee should look into acquiring pagers for employees needing them at the facility. Al mentioned that this action could fall under the electronic accessibility concerns for NOAA.

### **Communications Committee:**

Jesse James provided the council with a brief update of the Communications Subcommittee status and activities. Jesse solicited for interested persons willing to serve on the communications subcommittee. Erica Van Coverden indicated her interest, along with Anibal Mulero. Rich Behn also expressed his interest to help. Jesse indicated that the subcommittee had had several members retire or leave. The subcommittee had been discussing the update of the NOAA Managers and Supervisors EEO Handbook, as well as, the continuing development of the NOAA EEO Website. Jesse thanked Mr. Tillman Peck for his web page development efforts. Jesse

indicated that there would be a meeting of the subcommittee following the council's meeting today. Jesse also indicated he would be stepping down as subcommittee chair, and recording secretary for the council.

Al Corea addressed the council as to when the next council meeting would be. He indicated that an email would be forthcoming to members announcing a possible meeting date in Feb. or March of next year.

### **SPECIAL COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS**

Capt. Rich Behn discussed the changing of personnel on the council. He welcomed several new members. Rich also conveyed his thanks and appreciation to several members who were phasing off the council. He recognized Betty Dodds, Barbara Tobe, Howie Friedman, Fiona Horsfall, Jesse James, Lisa Hiruki-Raring, and Ibn Bailey for their contributions and presented plaques in appreciation of their service to NOAA as charter members of the EEO Council.

Al Corea thanked his OCR staff members for all their efforts in making these meetings possible.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 PM.

### **A SPECIAL NOTE:**

Being the NOAA EEO Council's recording secretary for the past 4 years, and this being my last official act as such, I want to take this opportunity to say to each and everyone on the council, both old and new that it has been a privilege and an honor to record the minutes of each council meeting for all of you. I hope that I have always conveyed an accurate accounting of the council's business with an unbiased hand. I task my successor to do likewise. And, I say thanks to each and everyone of you for a wonderful learning and educational experience. I have made many friends, and will always cherish each and every moment that I have spent with all of you.

And now, it is with my most sincerest action, that I respectfully submit to you my last recording of the minutes of the NOAA EEO Council's November 9, 2001 meeting.

May you always "Walk in Peace" wherever you go.

Jesse James, Jr.

Since I have the first opportunity to edit these minutes, I would like to state on the record that it has been a sincere pleasure to have Jesse James as a member of the NOAA EEO Council.

Al Corea